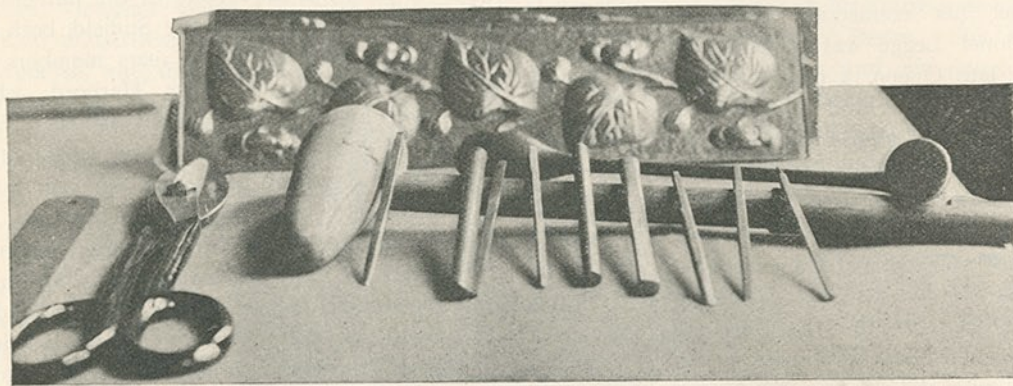


REPOUSSÉ WORK FOR GIRLS. By L. B. Neill.



Photographs. Copyright. "The Girl's Realm."

By Foulsham & Banfield.

THE TOOLS THAT ARE EMPLOYED IN REPOUSSÉ WORK.



A COPPER FLOWER-POT
BEFORE BEING HAMMERED,
AND COMPLETE.

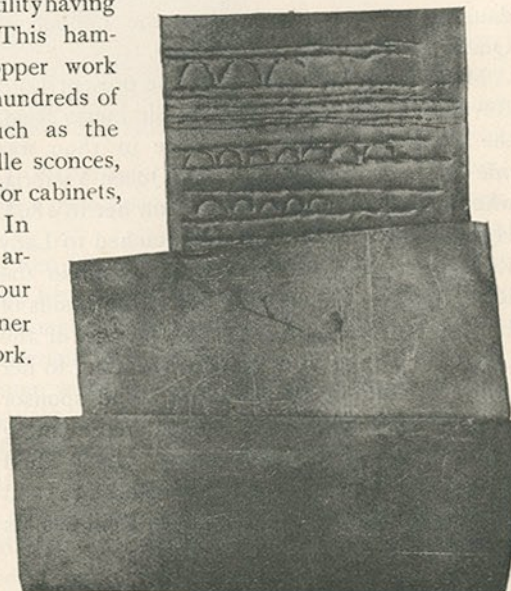
PERHAPS at first sight working in metal does not sound exactly a girl's accomplishment, but on further inquiry, and when it is understood that great delicacy of handling is of first importance, and that physical force plays no part in the work, we may reconsider our first judgement. Repoussé work, or "pushing" out a pattern on sheet metal, either brass or copper, may be used for many decorative purposes in the home, and is accounted one of the minor arts. These minor arts may be self-taught with success, and will commend themselves to the

practical as a means to beautify the useful. The fine arts stand on a different plane, utility having no part in them. This hammered brass or copper work may be applied to hundreds of ordinary articles, such as the use of bellows, candle sconces, brush backs, panels for cabinets, and mirror frames. In the course of this article, I will endeavour to show the beginner

how to set about acquiring facilities for the work.

The tools needed may be of the very simplest kind. Some beautiful repoussé work was produced by a French artisan, who used no other tool than an ordinary nail and hammer. The nail took the place of what is technically called a "punch"—that is, a tool that is used for the backgrounds of the pattern. These punches have various ends, according to the markings desired for the backgrounds. Then there is

A BEGINNER'S CRUDE STROKES.



METAL, UNWORKED OR POLISHED.



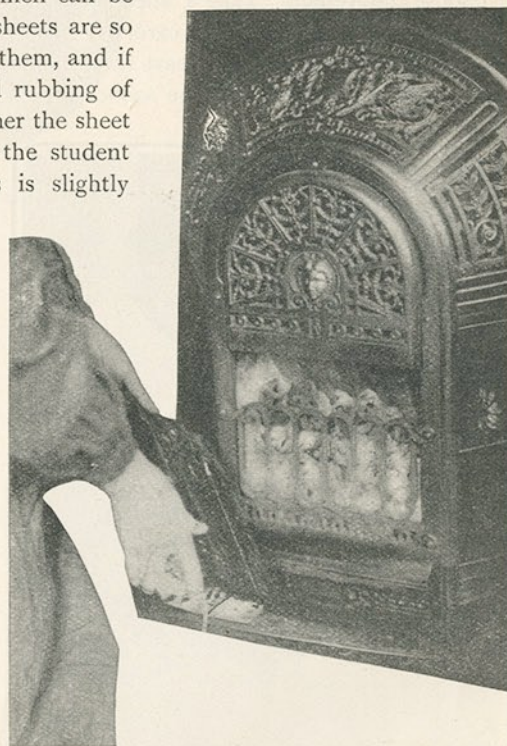
AT WORK—SHOWING THE PITCH BLOCK USED IN REPOUSSE'.

the "borderer," or tracer, for marking out the design. This is similar to a screw-driver, and is made in various widths, some only one-eighth of an inch across, to fit into the turns and corners of the pattern. Then there is a small steel hammer to tap the punches and borderers.

The material used is sheet brass or copper, which can be procured in various thicknesses. The thinnest sheets are so fine that a touch with a nail or stick will indent them, and if laid in a cup-shaped hollow cut in a board equal rubbing of the brass will produce the same shape. The thinner the sheet the easier the work, but soon practice will enable the student to use thicker and more durable metal. Brass is slightly cheaper than copper, and can be obtained in many grades of thickness.

Having collected tools and materials, with a white-pine board to work on, the first step will be to fix to the board the object and design we wish to work at. Before starting on that, however, the student should take some odd scraps of sheet metal and on them practise making a straight line with the borderer or tracer. Having drawn your line in soft lead pencil or ink on the metal, lightly indent it, and try to produce a perfect line, with equal pressure, in which it is not possible to discover any place where the borderer has been lifted and set down again. This needs care and practice, but it is essential to success, so spend some time on it, and do not attempt the simplest design until you are perfectly satisfied with your straight line.

A candle-sconce or finger-plate for a door are about the simplest things to begin with. Let

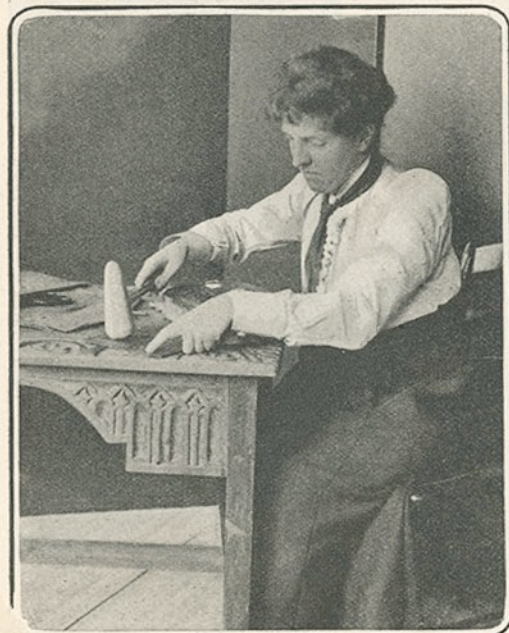


A STOVE THAT IS SOMETIMES USED BY WORKERS IN REPOUSSE' FOR HEATING THE PITCH UPON WHICH THE BRASS OR COPPER IS HAMMERED.



CUTTING THE COPPER.

us choose the former. Take a sheet of brass, about the thickness of a playing-card, five inches wide by thirteen inches long. Leave three inches at one end as the basis for the scone, which



THE HAMMERING SHAFT.

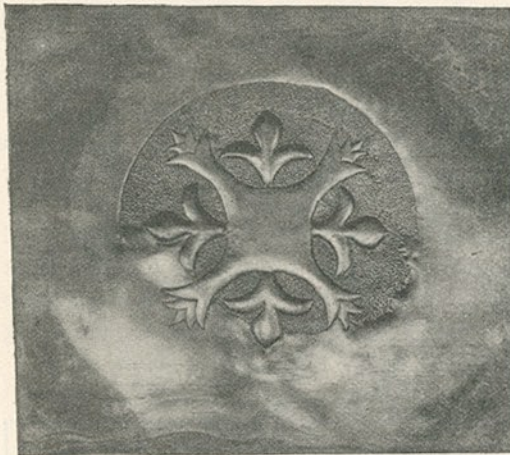
must be turned up horizontally when the work is finished. Place your sheet of brass on your pine board. Fasten it down with screws, having previously made holes in the corners of it by driving through a round nail. Now for the design, which may either be drawn with soft lead pencil on the brass, or may be transferred through tracing-paper, with a bone point or very hard lead pencil. Great care must be taken in tracing the pattern—it has been said that “it is harder to trace than to draw”—and make quite sure that your outline is perfectly satisfactory before you proceed further. The borderer is



MAKING THE DESIGN.

now wanted, and the chaser's hammer. First lightly line the shape of the scone, giving gentle taps with your hammer to a broad-edged borderer. It cannot be too much insisted on that these outlines must be very lightly done, so as to be just visible and that is all. The outline will require going over two or three times during the progress of the work ; if it is done too heavily at first the brass will buckle, that is, bend.

Next choose your punch for the background. One with cross lines on the end will do, since it will produce a roughened effect in the background. A small one will be necessary for the



A CANDLESTICK PARTLY HAMMERED.

corners, a larger one where the spaces permit of its use. Then punch in the whole of the background, and as you do so you will see your pattern rising. Great care must be taken to avoid breaking through the brass, which will certainly happen if the outline has been done too heavily. Directly the outline becomes indistinct retrace it lightly. When you are satisfied with the work, lift it from the board, and with a pair of shears (which can be procured with the tools) cut the shape of your sconce. If this is not convenient, take it as it is to a tin shop, where you can get it cut, have the end bent up, and a socket for the candle fixed. This, with a round hole in the top for hanging up, will complete our first production, just such an one as you see here.

Brass can also be cut with a fret-saw if you are familiar with its use. Many charming things, such as decorative hinges for chests, may be cut from it, and open-work brass for photograph frames and mirrors looks well placed over velvet. It should be made so that it can be easily removed for the purpose of cleaning.

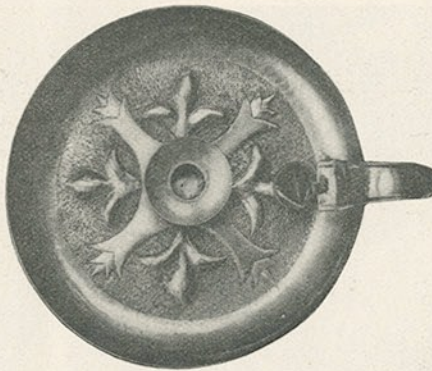
It may be of value to some readers if I mention here that the best thing to use for polishing brass is turpentine mixed with rotten stone or

tripoli to begin with, and finish off with oil and chamois leather.

In choosing designs the beginner should select something bold in style and free from pettiness of detail. Bold curved surfaces will catch and reflect the light, while touches and tracteries will produce little effect. Moreover, these touches and tracteries require greater skill since they have to be worked on the raised surface and from the outside. The basso relievo, or low relief pure and simple, is about all a beginner should attempt, so avoid any design which necessitates lines marking, say, the feathers of birds, the veining of leaves, or similar intricate details.

Let us now proceed to make a round plaque. If thin metal is used the work will only serve

for decorative purposes. Brass one-eighth of an inch thick would be necessary for a salver, but the amateur would at first find some difficulty in treating metal of this thickness. Take a square sheet of brass sixteen inches by sixteen inches, and screw it down on your board. With a pair of carpenter's compasses describe a circle sixteen inches in diameter, and within it one



CANDLESTICK COMPLETE (LOOKING DOWN).



AN ORNAMENTAL PLAQUE—A BEAUTIFUL SPECIMEN OF REPOUSSE WORK.

fourteen and a-half inches across. Within the smaller circle draw your pattern and proceed in the manner I have already described.

Deep chasing, or working in tracery lines from the outside, is done by use of a cake made of pitch and brick dust, or plaster of Paris. These cakes can be obtained ready for use. The brass pressed on this to fill in the pattern can be worked up from the outside with the extra lines and touches. What is known as "foxing" is a process which anyone devoting a little time to the pursuit will soon master.

"Foxing" means sticking the articles to be worked on to a pitch block. The block is of wood or iron, covered with a thick layer of pitch, which is warmed before a new article is pressed on to it. Before putting the brass on the pitch it should be slightly oiled, as it works better. Too much oil would prevent its sticking.

Annealing is a further process with which beginners need not trouble themselves. By it is meant a gentle warming of the metal to soften it, and prevent brittleness as it is being chased. This always proves effectual.

"Alice in Wonderland" as a Pastoral Play.



Photo. Fred. D. Spencer, Coleshill.

A GROUP OF THE PLAYERS IN "ALICE IN WONDERLAND," AS PERFORMED AT HAMS HALL, BIRMINGHAM.

It is interesting to note that the "Alice" in this production is a cousin of the original "Alice" for whom Lewis Carrol wrote the story.

Two successful pastoral representations of "Alice in Wonderland" were lately given at Hams Hall, near Birmingham, the seat of Lord Norton, an account and photograph of which are sure to interest a great many of our readers who take pleasure in this charming form of entertainment. The play was cleverly adapted for the occasion by Mrs. Charles Liddell (by kind permission of Messrs. Macmillan), and the whole was produced by the Hon. Miss Adderley. It was performed in a glade in the garden, and although the weather interfered somewhat with the success of the afternoon performance, that in the evening presented an ideal spectacle in the glow of the limelight. None of the members of the caste exceeded the age of seventeen, and, with Mr. Cliffe Stanford as stage manager, they all did exceedingly well. Miss Audrey Liddell, who took the name-part, is a cousin of the original "Alice" for whom Lewis Carrol wrote the story. She made an ideal dream-child, with her quaint old-fashioned simplicity of manner, and her appearance was an exact representation as drawn by Tenniel. Miss Isabel Adderley was attractive and amusing as the Duchess, and her sister, Miss Joan Adderley, was the maddest of Mad Hatters. Miss Lettice Adderley and Miss Eileen Tangye were both enchanting in their respective parts of the White Rabbit and the Dormouse, and Miss Mary Liddell made an excellent Mouse. Master A. Wellington distinguished himself both as actor and vocalist in his three parts, and Mr. B. Sullivan made a capital March Hare. A pleasing feature of the performance was the charming music arranged by Mr. C. Liddell, and the various songs, especially "Only a Dream so Sweet," sung by "Alice" to the tune of "Under the Deodar," proved a fitting ending to a charming Pastoral Play.